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An Elementary Experimental Chemistry. By JOHN BERNARD EKELEY. New York: Silver, Burdett & Co.

THIS book is divided into three parts. Part I consists of experiments illustrating the general methods of preparation and the properties of the common metallic and nonmetallic elements and their compounds. The experiments are clearly stated and sufficiently detailed. The order of arrangement offers some advantages over the usual one, but may have a tendency to dissipate rather than concentrate the mind on the subject at hand. Some of the experiments might better be reserved for the lecture-room, especially when large classes are to be handled.

The experiments in Part II illustrate the laws and theories of chemistry. The number given is unusually large, and some of them require too much time and skill and too complex apparatus to be serviceable in a large majority of the schools even of the better college class.

Part III is a description of the elements and compounds studied in the former sections, and contains an outline of qualitative analysis.

The book, as a whole, contains much valuable material, though not new, but there is danger that it cannot be used in high schools, nor in colleges except where apparatus in large quantities and of somewhat an unusual kind can be secured. Some of the conclusions are unwarranted, some statements of fact wrong and some of the English quite misleading. There is a question whether the general plan of the book is the best. But by better digestion and adaptation it may become a valuable text.

JAS. H. RANSOM.

PURDUE UNIVERSITY.

Physical Experiments. A Laboratory Manual. By JOHN F. WOODHULL and R. D. VAN ARSDALE. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1900.

THIS book consists of a rather sketchy outline of some of the simplest and commonest experiments in Physics. The book might be useful to suggest experiments to a teacher of Elementary Physics, but could hardly be used as a Laboratory Manual, because the experiments are too largely qualitative.

H. G. GALE.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

Exercises in Natural Philosophy. By MAGNUS MACLEAN. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1900.

THIS book contains over seven hundred well selected problems, including both questions on theory and numerical examples, of grade corresponding to a first college course. Some of the most important formulæ are derived and hints for solution accompany most of the examples. To a teacher lacking sufficient originality to formulate his own questions the book would be very useful.

H. G. GALE.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

SOME RECENT SPANISH TEXTS.

ALARCÓN'S *El Capitán Veneno*. Edited, with vocabulary and notes, by G. G. BROWNELL. American Book Company, pp. 143 (93 of text.)

THIS story of a confirmed woman hater and of his subsequent discomfiture at his own game, is one of the most entertaining and best known of the author's work. It

abounds in humorous touches, and the portraiture of its characters is strong and sympathetic, appealing throughout to the reader's interest. The story possesses the necessary qualifications for becoming a desirable school and college text for first year students, having the further great advantage — so seldom realizable in language texts of the better class — that the story is short enough to be presented in its entirety without undergoing mutilation or other impairment at the hands of an editor, aside from that which too often results, in other respects, from the process of editorship.

While possessing the needed qualifications for appearing creditably in a series of language publications for school and college use *El Capitán Veneno* has some drawbacks which can be overcome only by careful editorial workmanship. In the first place, the book is a difficult one for early first year reading. Properly, it should be taken up at that stage of the course when the learner has so far progressed as to be able to dispense with the need of special vocabularies and can rely upon a general dictionary, which for his purpose will afford better training. But the publishers have evidently thought otherwise by equipping the book with a special vocabulary with the aim, presumably, of fitting it for early use. We are of the opinion that the preparation of special vocabularies for language texts is inadvisable for any but distinctly elementary work, where the presence of the limited lexicography needed is an aid to intelligent study and a saving of time. But outside of this category special vocabularies are rather objectionable than otherwise; and in the case of difficult texts they are a distinct disadvantage, inasmuch as they take up space which might be much more profitably applied to the greater development of helpful explanatory notes.

The present text is of a nature calling for editorial work of the most thorough and careful kind. It abounds in idioms, and its abundant dialogue is of more than average difficulty. The learner's task — and incidentally the teacher's — would have been lightened had the vocabulary been dispensed with and its place taken by a fuller gloss of idiomatic turns and phrases. In some cases these explanations are insufficient or misleading, in others they are lacking. To cite some examples: the editor gives no explanation of *no poder menos de* (p. 29, l. 21), although it might have been included in the vocabulary. True, the student may infer its meaning without special reference being needed, but completeness of arrangement would have taken account of it somewhere. The same remark applies to *á mis tres Marias* (p. 34, l. 12). No adequate explanation is given to *libros de caballería* (p. 38, l. 2), *echar su cuarto á espadas* (p. 37, l. 20), *á cusar las cuarenta* (p. 48, l. 26), *cuidado si tiene hígados* (p. 49, l. 11), *la de Dios es Cristo* (p. 72, l. 2), *reo en capilla* (p. 72, l. 21). For this last the editor gives us in the vocabulary merely "a sentenced criminal" a meaning doubtless sufficient for its place; but a footnote might have made clear to the reader the full significance of this picturesque expression, so characteristic of Spanish feeling and custom. *Don Rodrigo en la horca* (p. 80, l. 34) is ignored. The meaning of *dicho se está* (p. 66, l. 20) cannot be readily construed by the beginner from the only vocabulary help bearing upon the subject, *estarse* — "to be detained, to stay." The meaning given by the editor to the homely popular phrase *esas calles de Dios* (p. 13, l. 28), "any of the streets, all of the streets" quite fails to suggest the fine flavor of the original. This is hard to transmit by any attempt in constructing an equivalent, but an explanation might have directed attention to the desired idea. The same criticism in respect to the editor's frequent tendency to put forward very free or misleading equivalents might be applied to his version of *dale que dale* (p. 81, l. 20), "keep on, hang it." Rather the meaning is "there you're at it again."

It seems a pity that publishers should not be more circumspect in duplicating excellent editions of the same work already in existence, unless the new form clearly has some additional advantage justifying the time and expense put upon it. A more rational policy in this respect would effect a great saving in many directions. The present edition of *El Capitán Veneno* is inferior to a preceding one which has latterly been published, and its appearance cannot, therefore, be said to fulfil any truly useful purpose. The editor's object seems to have been to reduce information to the briefest limits, a policy which in the present instance has involved many sacrifices in efficiency. For if a book is to discharge its mission worthily it should not leave to the devices of the busy — and peradventure ill-equipped — teacher that which properly comes within its own province.

VALERA'S *El Pájaro Verde*. Edited by G. G. BROWNELL. Cloth, 12mo. 28 pages of text, with notes and vocabulary. Price 45 cents. Ginn & Co.

THIS is a popular and pleasing fairy tale of a leading Spanish author, a text well adapted for early reading. The language is easy, the style simple, and the idioms not so numerous or unusual as to be disconcerting to the beginner. The present edition is a practicable one, with vocabulary and notes. The latter are sparing in quantity and quality, although perhaps all that the nature of the text absolutely calls for. Idioms receive, as a rule, free translation without explanation. We think this course a disadvantage, although there are some teachers who might deem such explanations wasted on beginners, or would leave them to the ingenuity of the teacher, who, presumably is competent to fill in the gaps. Unfortunately this last desideratum is not always attainable in a system of school assignments so frequently met with where teachers are often forced to make the most irrational or fantastical combinations of subjects committed to their charge.

A body of composition exercises is appended to the text, made up of twenty groups of English sentences paraphrased from Spanish originals scattered throughout the text. The usefulness of these exercises would have been greatly heightened had the choice of a given group been circumscribed to certain definitely stated pages or passages. As it is, the pupil is obliged to glean over a wide field in the hopes of picking up, here and there, the kernels he is looking for. Carried to excess the process is apt to be discouraging instead of having, as it should have, stimulating results.

The edition is in striking contrast to current usage in that the text is not preceded by a learned and erudite biographical-critical treatise on the author and his works. Such a treatise would be hardly in keeping with the literary proprieties to be observed toward a short fairy story. But we think that a few lines of information about the author and his work would have been welcome to both teacher and student. Even this is lacking.

LESAGE'S *Historia de Gil Blas de Santillana* (Padre Isla's version). Edited with notes and vocabulary by GEDDES and JOSSELYN. D. C. Heath & Co., pp. 244 (165 of text).

WE are glad to note the appearance of this celebrated work in a form convenient for school and college use. For the fact that the *Historia de Gil Blas* purports to be a Spanish translation from the French original of Lesage matters little in the practical estimate of Padre Isla's work. The subject-matter of Lesage's novel is far more